

## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Minister inaugurates dry port



**IRNA** – The first phase of Iran's biggest dry port and rail terminal called Aprin was officially inaugurated on Monday in a ceremony by Roads and Urban Development Minister Mehrdad Bazrpash.

Covering approximately 450 hectares of land near the capital Tehran, Aprin is located at the junction of Iran's East-West and North-South rail corridors, which makes it a significant hub for the distribution and exports of goods via railroad.

## Call for boosting trade with Qatar



**IRNA** – The head of Iran's Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) stressed the expansion of trade ties with Qatar and cooperation with the Qatari traders and businessmen in the field of partnership and joint investment and infrastructure development.

Alireza Peyman-Pak made the remarks on the sidelines of the Iran-Qatar business forum in Tehran on Monday.

## Iran plans to produce 160K tons of shrimp per year



**IRNA** – The head of Iran Fisheries Organization (IFO) said that the country has set a target to produce some 160,000 tons of shrimp per year.

Hossein Hosseini said on Monday that the target will be part of Iran's Seventh Five-year Development Plan (2023-27).

He said Iran has also set a target to reach some 500,000 tons of farmed output from the sea and some 850,000 tons of sea fishing.

IFO figures indicate that Iran produced 61,000 tons of shrimp in 950 aquaculture centers in the 11 months to late February.

Kazakh PM to discuss trade in Tehran soon: *Envoy*

## Economic Desk

Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Alikhan Smailov will visit Iran to discuss the expansion of bilateral trade, announced Kazakh ambassador to Tehran on Monday.

Speaking on the sidelines of a press conference in Tehran on the Mazhilis (parliament) and Maslikhats elections of Kazakhstan which will be held on January 19, Askhat Orazbay said two meetings of Iran-Kazakhstan Joint Economic Commission have been held in recent year.

It is planned to sign some new agreements between Iran and Kazakhstan during the visit of Smailov to Tehran which will be more beneficial for both sides in the future.

Point to the growing trade between his country and Iran, the envoy added that the Ports and Maritime Organization of Iran has prepared plans for development of trade with Kazakhstan.

"During the COVID pandemic, the road and rail transit of goods between the two countries via Turkmenistan stopped, but their trade has continued."

Talking on the upcoming elections in Kazakhstan, Orazbay said the upcoming Mazhilis (the lower chamber of the Kazakh parliament) and the Maslikhats (local administrative bodies) elec-

tions will take place on March 19.

"President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev dissolved the Mazhilis and terminated the powers of the Maslikhats on January 19, when he announced the date of the elections for the lower chamber. Later, the Central Election Commission (CEC) set March 19 as the date for Maslikhat elections.

In his statement, President Tokayev said: "The holding of early elections of the Mazhilis and Maslikhats is dictated by the logic of the constitutional reform, supported by citizens at the national referendum. According to the referendum results, our country moved to new, fairer, and more competitive rules of formation of the representative branches of power."

Tokayev first proposed the early elections of the Mazhilis and Maslikhats in his Address to the Nation on September 1 last year.

"Thanks to the constitutional reforms implemented last year in Kazakhstan, registering political parties has become significantly easier. For example, the registration threshold has been reduced from 20,000 to 5,000 members. The minimum requirement for the number of regional party representations was also reduced from 600 to 200 people."

As a result, several new



political parties have registered before the upcoming election. Overall, seven parties are now registered in the country. CEC has so far accredited

111 international observers for the elections from three international organizations (the OSCE ODIHR, the Interparliamentary Assembly of the CIS member states, CIS observ-

er mission) and 16 foreign states (PRC, the Netherlands, South Korea, Belgium, Kyrgyzstan, Thailand, Armenia, Georgia, France, Iran, Britain, Slovakia and Estonia).

Oil exports to increase in coming months: *Minister*

● SHANA

Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji said crude oil exports from the country will further increase in the upcoming months despite the growing pressure of the US sanctions on the Iranian energy sector.

Owji said that Iranian oil exports had reached significant levels in February amid efforts by the country to get round the sanctions and pump more oil to markets in East Asia, according to Press TV.

"Iran's oil sales over the last month (February) was considerable despite the sanctions and they are expected to further increase in the coming months," the minister was quoted as saying by IRNA.

Figures by international tanker tracking services released in January showed that oil exports from Iran in late 2022 had reached records not seen since the country came under US sanctions nearly five years ago. The figures suggested that Iran had pumped more than 1.2 million barrels per day of oil to export markets late last year and showed that Iranian crude shipments had continued to rise in early 2023 with higher exports to China and Venezuela.

In his remarks on Sunday, Owji said revenues collected from Iranian oil exports had more than doubled in early 2023 compared to the same period last year. He said revenues from sales of Iranian petrochemical shipments had reached nearly \$14 billion in the 11 months to late January.

## Newly-discovered lithium mines to start up by 2025

An official from Iran's Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade said the country will be able to extract lithium from two newly-discovered lithium deposits in the next two years.

Mohammad Hadi Ahmadi, who serves as deputy head of the ministry's local branch in western Hamedan Province, said that production from two lithium ore deposits in the region whose discovery were announced last week will begin by 2025.

Press TV first reported on the discovery of Iran's first lithium ore deposits on February 27. The ministry's exploration department said at the time that the deposits in Hamedan contain some 8.5 million tons of lithium ore, making the pair one of the largest in the world.

Ahmadi said that the two deposits cover an area of around 11 square kilometers in Qahavand Plain, located more than 50 kilometers to the east of the provincial capital of Hamedan. He said the discovery of the deposits had taken nearly four years, adding that the MIMT is currently studying technological capacities existing in two developed countries as part of efforts to start up the mines through a partnership with private investors.

Ministry of Industry, Mine and Trade authorities are convinced that more lithium ore deposits could be discovered in Hamedan, a province with vast deposits of clay which is a source of lithium.

Demand for lithium has risen in the global markets in recent years as the metal is a key ingredient in manufacturing batteries used in mobile phones and electric cars.



● IRNA

## Raeisi, Putin discuss economic cooperation, joint projects

"Both sides gave a positive assessment of the level

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and dynamics of the development of Russia-Iran relations," the statement said according to TASS news agency. It noted that Raeisi and Pu-

tin had agreed to maintain further contacts.

In its report, TASS said the International North-South Transport Corridor is one of the infrastructure projects pursued by Russia and Iran.

Iran, together with India

and Russia, is pushing forward with the sea and rail corridor that could substantially reduce the time and cost of shipping goods from India to Europe.

The 7,200km multimode route was proposed by the three countries in 2000.

Later, the number of participants expanded to 14.

It envisages a network of ship, rail and road for freight transport that will cut carriage costs by about 30-60% and transit time from 40 days to about 20 days. The goal of the project is to

attract transit cargo traffic from India, Iran and the Persian Gulf through the Russian territory to Europe.

Now the project combines several different transport systems of individual states.